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ELUCIDATION

OF

MR. BOWYER'S PLAN

FOR A *K*

MAGNIFICENT EDITION

OF

HUME'S
HISTORY OF ENGLAND,

WITH

A CONTINUATION

BY

G. GREGORY, D.D. &c.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY T. BENSLEY,

FOR

R. BOWYER, HISTORIC GALLERY,
PALL MALL.

1795.

THE HISTORY OF

THE

REIGN OF

CHARLES THE FIRST

BY

JOHN BURNET

OF LINCOLN

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME THE SECOND

IN TWO VOLUMES

THE SECOND

VOLUME

OF THE

HISTORY

OF

THE

REIGN

OF

CHARLES

THE

FIRST



ELUCIDATION.

ALREADY has a sketch of a plan for a superb and complete History of England been presented to the public, in which it was proposed to combine every effort of the arts, to render it worthy a nation distinguished for its taste and liberality: already have been exhibited specimens of the style, in which this grand design will be executed: but the proprietor would deem himself wanting in gratitude to the numerous and respectable body of subscribers, who have honoured his undertaking with their patronage, if he did not his utmost to

give them every satisfaction respecting the general scope and particular arrangement of his scheme. The order, connexion, and design, that pervade the whole, appear not from a few disjointed parts: in a few separate links of the chain we cannot perceive its bearings and dependencies: and such, from the nature of the publication, have necessarily been the specimens, that have hitherto met the public eye.

When the original prospectus of this work was put forth, proposals for another edition, it may be remembered, were circulated: whether with a view to establish a rival publication, or to injure this, may be a matter of doubt. The publisher, however, appeared inadequate to the task; and of course the undertaking failed. But in the mean time, as every advantage was obviously taken of Mr. Bowyer's prospectus, prudence forbid his being too explicit in the detail of his arrange-

ments, lest an adversary should avail himself of a scheme, which had cost him some years to digest. This reason no longer exists. The progress already made precludes all possibility of another's treading the same ground, without appearing at best a servile copyist; whilst the artists, who have engaged to exert their talents in embellishing this work, set all fear of rivalry out of the question. Thus, without any apprehension of injury to the undertaking, the proprietor may now venture to explain to the subscribers whatever may have appeared obscure; shewing what they may in future expect, and how far his design extends.

To find a History of England worthy of being adopted as the ground of those magnificent embellishments, which it was the design of this undertaking to produce, no difficulty could occur, as the immortal work of Hume presented itself. This, however, comes

down only to the revolution; since which a period too fertile of events has elapsed to be neglected; particularly as, approaching nearer to our own times, we cannot but feel highly interested in their detail. A continuation of Hume was of course indispensably necessary: and for this continuation perhaps it would not be easy to select a person more fitted by his candour, impartiality, and the course of his studies, than Dr. Gregory.

The various ornaments, proposed to decorate this eminent display of literary ability, in which our nation may justly take pride, will perhaps be most perspicuously elucidated by classing them under their respective heads of Historic Subjects, Portraits, Ancient Edifices, Ornamental Vignettes, Sea Fights, Monuments, Coins and Medals, and Miscellaneous Ornaments, concluding with a few remarks on the execution of the Typographical

part of the History, which forms the basis of this superstructure. First then of the

HISTORIC SUBJECTS.

To delineate the most striking events of history has ever been deemed one of the noblest employments of the pencil. In every age, in every nation, where the arts have flourished, the painter has assisted the historian in perpetuating the remembrance of noble actions. Each has his separate province: the province of each has its distinct advantages. The historian traces the secret springs of a great event, pursues it through its progressive circumstances, and develops its future consequences. He pleases and he instructs. But in many of those events, which strongly arrest the attention, there is some striking moment, the effect of which is unavoidably weakened by the

mode of relating the tale. The deed of an instant is not told in the same space of time: and the exertion made by the mind, to figure to herself ideas from the words that describe them, renders her perception of them less vivid. Here is the painter's advantage. What is done in an instant, his pencil as instantaneously tells. All the faculties of the mind are employed in contemplating the scene without any exertion on her part: and the impression is indelible.

To every man the actions of his own countrymen are most interesting: and assuredly the history of Britain is by no means wanting in striking events. In recording these the historian has already performed his part: it remains for the painter to exert his talents in the same career. Hitherto little has been done; for till the present reign historical painting has been almost unknown in the British dominions. This

has been the case to such a degree, that foreigners, and these men of high repute, have absolutely denied the possibility of an Englishman's painting history; and philosophers have endeavoured to find the cause in the peculiarities of our climate. But this opinion must have arisen from the eagerness of genius to frame systems from a few facts, without sufficiently investigating their causes: for surely a nation, whose poets and philosophers may without arrogance challenge all Europe to produce their superiors, and whose writers want neither taste, genius, nor judgment, cannot be denied by nature the ingredients that constitute an historic painter. These must acquit our climate of the charge alleged against it; and some other cause for the fact must be sought. This cause appears in the want of adequate encouragement. Britain is eminently the nation of domestic sentiment. Else-

where it may occasionally burst out with momentary rapture; or strike the eye, with force indeed, but in solitary instances. Here it pervades a whole people, and burns with a durable flame. Thus to possess the portraits of absent friends, and to preserve the resemblances of those, who were dear to them when alive, have ever been the prevailing wishes of Englishmen. Hence portrait painting has been encouraged in this island with peculiar liberality, almost to the exclusion of every other branch of the art.

Of late, however, what private patronage was wanting to cherish, commercial speculation has begun to effect. Since engraving has become a branch of trade, another species of painting has been necessarily promoted. A few memorable actions have been recorded on the canvas: but these efforts of art have been few, the suggestions of the moment without any

regular plan, and confined chiefly to recent occurrences: yet they have been sufficient to shew what might be achieved.

Fully to rescue our artists from the imputation under which they have long lain, and to evince that historic painting is not less congenial to our clime than the rest of the fine arts, in which our countrymen have already shone, something more remained to be done, and in attempting this Mr. Bowyer was one of the first. For this purpose no happier plan perhaps could be suggested, than to form a set of elegant embellishments for a History of England. Thus public patronage will have a favourable opportunity of stretching her fostering hand, far wider than private encouragement could reach; whilst the art of the engraver multiplies and diffuses those beauties, which must otherwise be confined to a single cabinet.

What has been said must render the method to be pursued in selecting subjects sufficiently obvious: they must be in themselves interesting; they must be adapted to the pencil; and they must be from different periods. Yet it is to be observed that there are many interesting events incapable of being delineated by the painter; many striking incidents which afford not fit subjects for the pencil. The first requisite in a picture is to please the eye. This can be effected only by a proper arrangement of colour and figure, a judicious distribution of light and shade. At the same time it excludes every thing at which the eye would revolt, though it might be conveyed to the ear without offence. Variety of course will be an indispensable requisite. The order in which the prints appear is of no great moment. The Letter-press will naturally follow its regular train: but the Prints must necessarily be published

in the order in which they are finished. Those relative to remoter periods may not come out of the hands of the engraver so soon as those which record transactions more recent. This will cause an apparent irregularity for the present: but, when the work is completed, each will find its respective place: and, that no difficulty may occur in the arrangement, a correct Catalogue of all the engravings will be given with the last number, describing their subjects, and pointing out where they are to be inserted.

Of the manner in which the historical plates will be executed little need be said. The names of the painters, all of them men whom fame has already with justice placed at the head of their profession, have been enumerated in the prospectus: of the whole of the historical engravings Mr. Sharp has engaged to execute a fourth, and the rest will be the performances of men

of the first eminence. They will all be in the ancient manner of engraving, as the La Hogue, and the Death of Wolfe.

Whilst it is the province of the historical painter to give delight by rousing the passions, to fire the mind with emulation of heroic deeds, or to inspire it with detestation of criminal actions; there is a placid satisfaction arising from the contemplation of faithful images of those, whom we have been taught to admire or revere, which no cultivated mind would willingly forego. Thus

PORTRAITS

CLAIM a distinguished place among the embellishments of a history, which brings to our remembrance the great and good of past ages. To form a proper arrangement for this part of his scheme, has cost the proprietor

some trouble. The distinguished rank of the monarch gives him an indisputable title to a place in this class. In the page of history the statesman and the warrior are so conspicuous, as to throw almost every other character into shade. Yet, whilst we record those who have fought and bled in the field, or whose labours in the senate and the cabinet have tended to establish or subvert our liberties, surely they, who in the more retired walks of life have done honour to their country, ought not to be forgotten. Such men the historian has not wholly passed by: and in the erection of a splendid monument to the arts they would with much less propriety be neglected. It is indeed a fit office of the pencil to make reparation for the injustice of history. No apology therefore can be requisite for introducing amongst our portraits those of men, whose names, though unconnected with the sub-

version of states or the establishment of empires, will ever be remembered in the annals of the arts and sciences.

To confine ourselves to the portraits of the pre-eminently distinguished few, would be narrowing the source of gratification to the subscribers to the present undertaking, the extensive plan of which enables the proprietor to take a far wider range. Unhappily he has to regret that, of some of the oldest men of celebrity the nation has produced, no likeness is now to be found. These consequently must be omitted: for to give fictitious resemblances would not accomplish the purpose of his design. But to procure the best and most approved portraits that do exist, he will spare neither pains nor expense: and he has here to return his acknowledgments to those gentlemen, who with extreme liberality have permitted him

to copy originals, he could no other way have obtained.

Distributing these heads into their separate classes, they will for the most part be arranged in groups, ten or twelve in one plate, of a size sufficiently large to discriminate with ease and accuracy the characteristic features of each. This mode of arranging them embraces a double advantage. Whilst it gives room for a far greater number of portraits, it admits a species of decoration incompatible with the plainness and uniformity of single heads. In designing these decorations the taste and invention of the artist will have ample scope: for, whilst a certain degree of congruity is preserved in the general plan, it will be his aim to diversify as far as possible the particular embellishments.

The individuals to form each group will be taken in chronological order: since, though the distribution of them

into classes is obviously proper, and offers no insuperable difficulty, to rank them in the order of their merit would be a task, in which no two men would wholly agree; nay perhaps no man would completely approve tomorrow the allotment he should himself make today. From this method no doubt will arise the inconvenience of bringing together men very different in point of genius: yet still the blemish of a faulty appreciation of worth and abilities will be avoided, which, though the great luminaries of science be sufficiently conspicuous, would be inevitable with regard to those stars of inferior magnitude, which contribute their rays to illumine our hemisphere. At the same time a chronological display of the progress of science will have its peculiar advantages; and it will not be unpleasing to remark the variety of contemporary talents.

In admitting names into this ideal Temple of Fame, the proprietor has paid attention both to intrinsic merit and common renown: the living he has excluded for an obvious reason: but those, to whom death has opened the gates, however recently, he conceives entitled to a place. If they did not die in the period at which the history terminates, they were at least in existence then: and, whilst their portraits afford pleasure now to their contemporaries, to our posterity they will be what Locke and Newton are to us.

It may be necessary here to notice two instances of single portraits already given, apparently in contradiction to the plan above laid down. The picture of William the Conqueror had some claim to attention, from its antiquity. When the head of Pope was given, it was the proprietor's design to confine his heads of eminent men to a select

few of each class, and to allot a plate to each. He was not then aware how many plates would be required for such a purpose, and how much it would consequently encroach on the other embellishments of the work. More mature consideration has induced him therefore to relinquish this design, in favour of the more comprehensive and ornamental scheme now adopted. By this however the subscribers will lose nothing, and the work will suffer no blemish: since, to preserve uniformity, he means to consider the portrait of Pope as a supernumerary, unconnected with the work itself, serving to decorate the print-room, or enrich the portfolio, of the collector.

ANCIENT EDIFICES.

Nor to mention that the ruins of ancient buildings are of themselves in general highly picturesque, and are

therefore fit subjects for the graver, considered merely in an ornamental point of view; in a work like the present they have other claims to our notice. Whilst the historian is employed in recording memorable events, he forgets not the places in which they were transacted. The remembrance of the one is forcibly excited by the view of the other. Who could contemplate the castle of Fotheringay, without lamenting the fate of a beautiful and unfortunate queen? Who could survey the ruins of Corfe Castle without reflecting on the atrocious murder of the amiable Edward?

But ancient edifices have another chain of connexion with history, that will form a clue to the selection of subjects for this work. To mark the progress of the arts is certainly a part of the historian's duty. It will be as congenial therefore to the design of the present undertaking, as gratifying

to the lover of the sciences, to exhibit such views as shall give some idea of the progress of architecture in England, and of the different styles that have prevailed at different periods. This principle will guide Mr. Hearne in the choice of subjects for his drawings: Gundulph's tower, which has already appeared, being a specimen of the Norman style.

THE VIGNETTES

INTENDED to be introduced are of two distinct and appropriate kinds. One set will form brief and ornamental tables of contents to each reign, to which they are meant to be prefixed when the work is complete. Each of these will consist of a tablet, on which the principal occurrences of the reign will be engraved; with some historical event, by way of headpiece, taken from the reign to which it belongs.

The other set will be composed of characteristic implements or habiliments of the several periods of English history; and, independent of the ornamental effect, resulting from the picturesque arrangement of their constituent parts, it is presumed they will form a valuable repository of the costume of each age. The first of this set displays the costume of the Britons, anterior to the Roman invasion: the second marks the commencement of the Saxon heptarchy: and to each succeeding dynasty one will be appropriated. All these will be designed by Mr. Louthembourg, and engraved by Mr. Landseer.

SEA FIGHTS.

THE general want of interest in representations of naval engagements has been occasioned by the great similarity in pictures of this kind: this defect

will be studiously avoided, by introducing only such subjects of naval history as are marked by some peculiar trait of heroism or skill, or are distinguished by some prominent circumstance. In the embellishments of the history of a maritime power like Britain, confessedly unrivalled on the ocean, totally to neglect her chief strength and proudest boast would be inexcusable, whilst her annals abound with naval exploits. What can be done therefore, by selecting actions capable of sufficient variety, not to incur the imputation of sameness, will be attempted.

MONUMENTS

REMARKABLE for their beauty, singularity, or the celebrity of those, to whom they were erected, will constitute one class of the ornaments of this work. Of course the principal part

will consist of the performances of such artists, as have distinguished themselves in the successful employment of the chisel, we will not say to give permanence to fame, but to erect the tribute of gratitude to merit.

COINS AND MEDALS.

THE value of medals consists chiefly in the effigies they preserve, the events they record, and the information they give us concerning the aspect, with which those events were at the time beheld. Perhaps we have now none, that are authentic, older than the reign of Henry VII: from which period downwards it will be the object of the proprietor to select a few of the most interesting in each reign.

With respect to coins, care will be taken, that proper specimens of

such as have been most commonly in use, during the reigns of the different families on the throne, are introduced in such a manner as, it is hoped, will be deemed ornamental, as well as gratifying to curiosity.

MISCELLANEOUS EMBELLISHMENTS.

THE general plan of the ornamental part of this undertaking has now been gone through: and perhaps to one or other of the heads, under which it has been distributed, every engraving, that will be given in the course of it, may be referred. Still, whilst it affords such an extensive source of variegated decoration, Mr. Bowyer will not presume to say that he has exhausted the subject. It may happen that, in the progress of the work, something farther may suggest itself. Should this be the case, he will not

fail to embrace the hint; as he is ambitious of rendering this publication as complete and magnificent as possible, and bringing it to the utmost perfection that human abilities will allow.

It remains now to speak of the

TYPOGRAPHICAL PART.

It is somewhat singular, that many early specimens of printing exceed in beauty the productions of the presses in later days. But the cause is obvious: cheapness has been the prime object of printers, to which every other consideration has given way. Within these few years, however, regard has sometimes been had to beauty: yet in this respect the presses of England could not stand in competition with those of some foreign countries. To snatch the palm from her rivals, and give the British press a decided supe-

riority, formed one grand purpose of the present undertaking. For this end Mr. Bowyer has employed his utmost exertions. He has procured the most celebrated specimens of printing that existed in Paris, Parma, Madrid, and every part of Europe, where any pretensions to fine printing had ever been made; and has studied to extract the most beautiful characteristics of each, combining them with a dignified solidity suitable to the nature of the work. Harmonious proportion is essential to beauty: but there is not less harmony in the proportion of the Doric or Tuscan column, than in that of the light and elegant shaft of the Corinthian or Composite order. Each has its appropriate place: and where the majestic strength of the Tuscan is wanted, the airy gracility of the Corinthian would be as incompatible with true beauty, as offensive to the eye of taste.

The persevering application, and unwearied assiduity, necessarily required to attain a high degree of perfection in the formation of types, are not easily conceivable, as they do not obtrude themselves on the eye. In this application, in this assiduity, at least, Mr. Bowyer has not been wanting. What success has attended his labours it is not for him to decide. With more propriety he may remark that every thing has been done to give the letter its full effect, as it is worked at the press of Mr. Bensley, on paper manufactured by Mr. Whatman.

Thus has the general plan and scope of the work been detailed: from which it must appear that, if the execution be answerable to the design, and every precaution to ensure its success has been taken, the work itself must ultimately form the most splendid and magnificent monument of the arts, that ever appeared in any country, or

in any age: a monument worthy the munificence and patriotic spirit of Britons. Confiding in this munificence, and this patriotic spirit, Mr. Bowyer has deliberately ventured to embark in a scheme, in the completion of which not less than forty thousand pounds will be expended, unsupported but by the subscriptions of a liberal public. In foreign countries no work of any magnitude has been undertaken without the aid of a royal treasury: it is for Britain alone to boast, that in her dominions the purses of private individuals can effect more, than in other realms the wealth of monarchs dare attempt. Elsewhere the risk would have been madness: but it is otherwise here, where to deserve the patronage of the public is to secure it. Of this Mr. Bowyer was fully persuaded: and experience has shewn him that he was not mistaken. Hence he feels a double spur to his exertions:

gratitude to those who have honoured his scheme with their approbation and support; and the firm conviction that he must no longer expect this support, if he prove unfaithful to his trust, and slacken his efforts.

As this tract may fall into the hands of some, who from accident or unavoidable circumstances have never seen Mr. Bowyer's Prospectus, yet will be desirous of encouraging this national work; for so with propriety it may be termed, as it consists of the combined exertions of the most eminent native abilities, in celebrating native worth; it may be neither improper nor superfluous to subjoin the following abstract of the

PROPOSALS.

THE whole History will be published as nearly as can be computed in Sixty Numbers, making Six magnificent Folio Volumes. Each Number will contain one capital Historic Print,

with one or more Vignettes, Portraits, Views of Naval Engagements, Monuments, Ruins, Coins, or Medals.

The price to Subscribers is One Guinea each Number; and, in order to remove every possibility of doubt respecting the equitable and fair delivery of the impressions of the plates according to the order of subscription, such an engagement is given as will effectually answer that purpose.

A deposit of One Guinea to be paid at the time of subscribing.

A commodious Gallery has been erected for the exhibition of the historic pictures, that the public may have an opportunity of appreciating their merit; and to this Gallery the Subscribers to the work will have free admission.

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